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Open Doors
For the Detained
Volunteer



Price, Two Cents

Woman's Foreign Missionary Society
Methodist Episcopal Church
36 Bromfield Street, Boston, Mass.

Open Doors for the Detained Volunteer

TO HER WHO SAYS
"THE DOOR IS SHUT"

YOU think often of that white day when, after months of irresolution, you signed the Student Volunteer Declaration. The days that followed brought fresh knowledge of the world need, and the decision, made perhaps reluctantly and under pressure of conviction, grew into a passion. To go to the field came to seem the supreme *raison d'être*—the one thing worth doing. And now, after all this, God does not permit. Health or family or some other hindrance bars the way. While others of the Band are preparing to sail, you are trying to bid them a cheerful Godspeed, but in your heart you are saying, "Why this waste? What channel for this pent-up longing to help?" With another sorely tested you ask, "Why is light given to one whose way is hid and whom God hath hedged in?" Life looks full of "common days and level stretches white with dust."

Let me say that the one who writes this little word is no cold-blooded sermonizer, but one who, too, would go but God bids stay; one who must pray daily for help to say,

“ I worship Thee, sweet Will of God,
And all Thy ways adore.
Ill that He blesses is our good
And unblest good is ill,
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet Will!”

It will be more easy then to believe me when I say I am finding out that the door is not shut, but wide open.

Dear girl, you who are looking backward with a tear, and forward with a sigh, there is a place of privilege and power waiting for you in the home church. That home community, no matter how small or commonplace it may look, thirsts for the uplift of a great service. The need and want of the world is here as surely as it is yonder. Some whose lives touch ours to-day, cry, “ I would see Jesus,” as well as the Greek or the Hindu.

The young people of the church need you and they have a right to expect much from you. At first they may be a little in awe of one who had planned such a transcendental career as that of a missionary, but they are ready to admire and love and imitate. You may lead them to seek the things that are above in conversation, books, their fun, or in a career. A young woman I knew, who returned to what seemed a very dull community, within two years had inspired eight young people to enter college.

Then the mission study class that has languished for lack of a leader, you can make live and grip hearts, as a mission study class can

That company of Standard Bearers is waiting for the new life of your consecration. You may lead it on to victory. Last year reports came that some companies had died. Only one reason was assigned—lack of leadership.

There is a small door often overlooked because not so imposing as some—work with boys and girls. Your voice will lose its note of regret as you see their faces kindle over Gordon and Mackay, and their figures straighten to heroic bearing. You will find use for all you know, and be on the *qui vive* for more.

The Sunday school class you will be asked to take will lose its bored look, as it studies with you the Modern Acts of the Apostles, the current events of the Kingdom. One day we stood by the little graveyard where lie the charred remains of the Paotingfu martyrs—Horace Tracy Pitkin and others who, like him, went to God in a chariot of fire. That night some one read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and it was as if we heard it for the first time. Each word burned its way into our hearts.

You surely will not make the mistake of one college girl whose pastor gave her a class of red-haired, freckle-faced little Mamies and Annies from a part of town known as the Patch, and she looked down on that class. She thought she knew too much. Heaven pity her! She knew far too little, and she had forgotten the stern words of the Master concerning him who despised one of the little ones.

The women of the church need you—you who now take your place as a woman among them.

You know something, doubtless, of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and its marvelous history—how the little band of eight who, forty years ago, organized in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, now hear the rallying cry of three hundred thousand members and eight hundred thousand dollars. With your trained mind, your up-to-date methods, your missionary ardor, you can make the monthly meeting a tonic to women burdened with many domestic cares. It may mean a breath from the sea, a vision of mountains and space as they walk abroad with God in the wide earth. And you will discover unsuspected riches in the most unpromising members. She may be some old black Mary, half blind, crippled with rheumatism, no provision for a lonely old age. She had done a bit of work for one about to sail for the field. When money was handed her she cried, "Oh, please don't pay me! I want to feel as I sit at home that I have fifty cents invested in you in China." Old black Mary inspired the whole auxiliary and she often gave wings to that missionary's lagging feet and spirit as she thought, "I must be worth it. I must be worth it, precious money such as that."

Who can foretell the future? Your baffled purpose may live again, multiplied many fold in some other life or lives that you have inspired to volunteer. It may be one of the boys or girls of the King's Heralds. A little eight-year-old saw an ugly idol exhibited in a Sunday school talk. She went home and said to her mother, "When I get to be a big lady, I must go and tell those people that idol is not God." And that child

resolve flowered into a half-century of great missionary service in Burma, for the child became Mrs. Ingalls. It may be the selflessness of your spirit that will help some mother, so that instead of a stone of stumbling she may be a bulwark of strength to the son or daughter ready to volunteer.

May it not be that you and I need this work at home to test the purity and strength of our purpose? Do we say, "Oh, if it must be at home, why can't it be among the Mormons or in the Black Belt—something really heroic and worthy?" An incoming sophomore was spending her vacation in the country, where were several families of French Swiss farmers. Their children she invited to her temporary home, week by week, taught them Bible and missionary stories, singing, and incidentally the English language, for some of them could not as yet use the tongue of their adopted country. Is it not a good omen that this Student Volunteer, quick to sacrifice a golden holiday for her little foreign neighbors, will not be found wanting in that distant field to which she is under appointment?

Is our enthusiasm for humanity of such ardor that it will burn brightly at home? If it smolders here, we may well fear it would go out entirely in the mist and murk of heathendom. If our heart fails to quicken over him whom we see, how can we hope it will kindle toward those we have never seen? Can we endure the test and ring true? Then for us there is a special word, "For as his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by the baggage, they shall share alike." And the word is to us as

truly as to David, "Thou didst well that it was in thy heart."

Not only does the home church need us and we the work, but the work at home is vital to success yonder. More than a year ago we were at Port Arthur. With many a responsive thrill we climbed 203 Metre Hill and as an especial privilege were allowed to row about in the harbor and watch the divers at work bringing up parts of sunken Russian war-ships. It was a sight to remember—the diver buckling on his harness and going down, down, for buried treasures. He seemed so unafraid, and yet the very breath of his life depended on the man at the pump. Suppose that comrade grew tired or dissatisfied, because pumping is tame and monotonous. "It is unthinkable," you say, "when it means a life."

Yet do we not know beyond the shadow of doubting that we are as necessary to those who go, that on our faithfulness in prayer that prevails, in love that never fails, in giving that costs, hangs their success—yes, their life? Do we give ourselves to the work of developing in the home church a strong base for world-wide conquest with the same consecration as those on the field? Then are we one with them in service, and some day one in reward.

This is not all hypothesis. It is being done. As one Student Volunteer was about to graduate, her only sister died; and this sister had said, "You go with no anxiety for father and mother, now no longer young. They will always have a home with me." She went back to a town of less than one hundred. There were no young people, for

they were away, either getting or using an education. She organized a mission band among boys and girls, became a virtual pastor's assistant, though unsalaried—she was a real Volunteer—went once a week to a neighboring city to lead a mission study class in the Young Woman's Christian Association, acted as friendly visitor to comatose auxiliaries, all the time studying, praying, yearning after her chosen field with purpose that knew no limitation.

Detained Volunteers are secretaries of foreign mission boards, leaders in the Student Volunteer Movement, in social settlements, in every activity for the uplift of America and, through America, the world. When they knew God did not permit, they lost no time in complaints, but speedily found the other work God had for them to do. After all, it is one army the wide world round, and "there's good fighting all along the line."

The door shut? It is flung open to a large life and a great service, if only we are in Him who said, "I am the Door."